

OLC 69-0268

28 March 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Senate Armed Services Subcommittee
on Bomber Defense - 24 March 1969

1. On 24 March 1969, [redacted] OSR, briefed the Subcommittee on Bomber Defense of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The briefing lasted from approximately 1405 until 1540 hours. The room, 212 Old Senate Office Building, [redacted] [redacted] The briefing was conducted on a Top Secret level. No transcript was taken.

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2. Present from the Subcommittee were:

Senator John Stennis (D., Miss.), Chairman
Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D., Hawaii)
Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R., Me.)
Senator Peter H. Dominick (R., Colo.)
Senator George Murphy (R., Calif.)

3. Present from the Subcommittee staff were:

James Kendall, Senate Preparedness Subcommittee staff
Charles Kirbow, Senate Armed Services Committee staff

4. Present from the Agency were:

25X1A [redacted] Acting Deputy Director, OSR
25X1A [redacted] Chief, Aircraft Systems Branch, OSR
John M. Maury, Legislative Counsel

25X1A 5. In his prepared presentation, [] described aircraft composing the Soviet strategic bomber force, including heavy bombers, tankers, medium bombers and naval bombers; Soviet long range air force (LRAF) missions; ASM types and characteristics; numbers of aircraft of each type produced, when produced, and present operational inventories; estimates of future Soviet strategic bomber programs, or the lack thereof, and dissents to these estimates by U.S. Air Force; and possible intelligence lead time before a new strategic bomber might be assigned to Soviet operational units.

6. During the ensuing discussion, the following points emerged:

25X1A a. At the Chairman's request, [] recapitulated the figures regarding production and present operational inventory of various Soviet strategic bomber models.

25X1A b. In response to the Chairman's question regarding U.S. capabilities to provide early warning of attack by the Soviet LRAF, [] deferred to the U.S. Air Force.

25X1A c. In response to Senator Dominick's question of whether the Soviet LRAF would be employed for an initial strike or only a follow up to an ICBM attack, [] summarized our information on recent Soviet exercises.

d. Concern was expressed by Senators Smith and Dominick over whether we could differentiate between an impending attack or merely an exercise in cases where the Soviet LRAF approached the North American continent. []

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e. Senator Inouye registered his concern on this point, particularly when told that we had no reliable way of knowing whether or not Soviet aircraft engaged in these exercises carried armed bombs.

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f. Senator Murphy mentioned information he had received that during the R&D phase Soviet aircraft development "goes underground" and is not detectable by our collection resources. He was told we had no evidence this was the case, and were reasonably confident that by the time prototype testing had begun we would obtain evidence of what was happening.

g. Senator Murphy was interested in possible Soviet reactions to our phase-out of heavy bomber production.

h. James Kendall asked why we discounted the possibility that medium bombers might be used in attacks against the United States. It was explained that our judgment was based largely on training and deployment patterns.

7. Mr. Kendall asked for detailed figures on our projection of Soviet heavy bomber inventory through 1975, which we promised to provide.

8. In conclusion, the Chairman remarked that this was "the best briefing on the subject we have heard."

9. Follow up action:

Mr. Kendall's request for figures on Soviet heavy bomber inventory 1970 through 1975.

JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

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